4-1941
Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

FARMERS BACK FIGHT AGAINST DIFFERENTIAL

Anti-War Feeling Runs High At Etowah County Farm Meeting

MAR 20 1941

ALTOONA, Ala.—Small farmers of Etowah County sat down together here Saturday and talked over the problems that face the plain people of the South and the nation. They not only talked, but they took action.

It was the county meeting of the Farmers' Union.

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Wage differential came up during the day. These farmers heard that John L. Lewis was demanding on behalf of union coal miners that the southern miners be paid as much as miners anywhere else in the nation.

"Certainly they should be paid the same," one farmer said. "We'll help the miners get more money and then there'll be a better market for the things we sell. After we help them win their fight for more money, then we can talk to the miners about organizing cooperatives together so that there won't be that big difference between what we farmers get for our products and what the consumer has to pay finally."

This statement was enthusiastically accepted by the assembled farmers.

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AGAINST WAR

The meeting didn't confine its discussion to the South. Anti-war feeling ran high and the expression of solidarity with city working people was deep.

The American People's Meeting in New York April 5 and 6 was given the unanimous endorsement of the group, and effort will be made to have one or two delegates attend. A letter was approved to be sent to the International Harvester Company giving full support to the striking workers of that company. The letter demanded that the company bargain collectively with its workers and treat them fairly. The Anti-Poll Tax week, May 11-17, was endorsed unanimously.

A powerful play against war was given by the Birmingham chapter of the League of Young Southerners, and when the last smashing line was finished, C. L. Starkey who lives near Walnut Grove arose to comment. "It's a strange thing," he said, "how people separated and having no contact with each other will be thinking the same things. That play was more truth than poetry. It said exactly the things that I've been thinking, and I guess that most folks have been thinking."

The play was presented by Mrs. Bea Jaye, Miss Millie Brainin, Laurent Frantz, Margaret Gelders and Gerald "Buddy" Harris, Jr. Later young Harris told of the work the Young Southerners are doing in organizing young people in town and on the farm.

NEED UNITY

C. L. Peeples, of the Altoona local, welcomed the county meeting with a strong plea for unity among the working class people. "I'm a union man," he said, "whether it's CIO, AF of L, Railroad Brotherhood or Farmers Union—I'm for the unions that give us folks strength to fight our battles. I say if they try to tear up the workers' unions, that every farmer in America ought to throw his plow under a shed and not hit a lick until the working people win out."

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John B. House, organizer of the Rubber Workers' Union, who was set upon in Gadsden recently and beat into unconsciousness with black jacks, was present and spoke. "We must organize, farmers and workers, to save what democracy we have and to get the rights we should have," he told the farmers. He is back at work in Gadsden, organizing the rubber workers.

Sam Hall, publisher of The Southern News Almanac, spoke on the need for greater control in the hands of the people over their government. Howard Lee, executive secretary of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, told of the recent organization of the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation. Independent political action by the people plus strong organization is what's needed today, Mr. Lee pointed out.

Gerald Harris, farm representative of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and a member of the Farmers' Union state organizing committee, spoke. George Campbell, head of the state organizing committee, told of successes to date, and urged every member to work at organizing the Farmers' Union.

L. A. Holloway, president, presided. J. K. Allen, state secretary and treasurer, was present. He is a member in this county.

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Farmers Union Holds Council Meeting In Almanac Office

MAY 15 1941

The Jefferson County Convention of the Farmers' Union met in the offices of The Southern News Almanac Saturday, the Newt Gresham Smith local acting as hosts.

The meeting was addressed by Howard Lee, executive secretary of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, who told farmers all working people must unite for economic and political action to protect democratic rights and raise living standards. He said the Southern Conference is a pioneer in this field of people's organizations.

Mr. Lee, Joseph S. Gelders, chairman of the Conference's civil rights committee, and others emphasized the fight against the poll tax. The convention endorsed anti-poll tax week, May 11-17, and designated delegates to a Birmingham city-wide anti-poll tax meeting to be held May 31.

The convention demanded of their representatives in Congress that the income certificate plan of the Farmers' Union be adopted to save the farms and living of small farmers. A demand for crop insurance for cotton was also sent to Washington.

The United Mine Workers were congratulated for the gains they have made and further support was voted. Virgil Moncrief, member of the Hamilton Slope Local of United Mine Workers, was a visitor at the sessions and stated the case of the miners.

Erby Day, of Warrior, was raised from vice-president to the office of president of the county body, and Mrs. Etta Guthrie Kimberley was elected vice-president.

A county organizing committee was set up with Charlie Harding, Kimberley, as chairman, and Gerald Harris, Jr., and Robert Miller as the other members. Active organizational work in the county is planned.

The June meeting of the county convention will be held with the Cane Creek local. At Saturday's meeting the home local, and Bagley, Cane Creek and Kimberley locals were represented.

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FARMERS' UNION ON UPSWING

Etowah Meeting Hears 3 Locals Are Re-Instated

The Etowah County Farmers' Union held its July meeting with the Hale School local last Saturday. The county organizing committee is planning some intensive work and each local present talked of the part it would play in this work.

Plans were being laid to hold a picnic and get-together the latter part of August and members of union locals from all sections of the state would be invited. Miss Esther Ekbald, of [illegible] and member of the National Farmers' Union educational committee, is expected to be in Alabama at that time and to appear on the program.

George Campbell, state organizer and chairman of the Alabama Farmers' Union announced that a meeting of the [illegible] executive committee will be held in Birmingham July 26. Mr. Campbell is also chairman of the committee.

George Campbell, state organizer, and Gerald Harris, secretary of the state organizing committee, were among those who addressed Saturday's meeting. Both stressed the need of a strong Farmers' Union in these critical times. Mr. Harris called attention to the injustices practiced against farmers at this time when farm income is held to certain levels and profits of the special interests are allowed to run into billions.

A detailed account of the finances of the state organizing committee was given. Three locals were re-instated in a trip through Bibb and Chilton Counties during the week, the meeting was told.

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Birmingham, Ala.

Eviction Of Farm Families Is Blocked

FEB 13 1941

MEMPHIS.—Threatened eviction for union activity of approximately forty tenant families from Missco Homesteads project near Wilson, Arkansas, has been stopped according to information received at the Memphis district headquarters of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America.

FEB 13 1941

After a bitter six weeks fight in which charges and counter charges were hurled back and forth between members of Local Union No. 345 (Missco) and project supervisory officials—and during which petitions, letters and telegrams of protest were used by both sides, the Memphis office of the agricultural workers union has been advised by both the National and Regional offices of the Farm Security Administration that "no action will be taken against any individual due to his membership in a Union."

FSA officials also expressed a willingness to cooperate with the union in "our mutual efforts toward bettering the conditions of project members." The project at Missco is under the sponsorship and supervision of the FSA.

According to Harry Koger, president of the Sharecroppers and Farm Labor Division of UCAPAWA, the union's fight against discrimination started in December after notices to union members to 'liquidate and move at once" were sent by FSA Supervisor of the project, Carlton G. Jerry, an avowed enemy of organized labor. Jerry claimed that he was acting on advice of the Mississippi County FSA Advisory Board which is composed of large planters.

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Birmingham, Ala.

Quick Aid By City Workers Stops Eviction Of Seven Farm Families In Arkansas

MAR 20 1941

WILSON, Ark.—The timely aid of organized city workers saved the homes and farms of some organized farmers near here this week who were up against a situation just a little too tough for them to handle alone.

The seven farmers, all members of the Missco Resettlement Administration corporative project (just how "cooperative" it is is shown by the fact that the project supervisor seems to be able to turn members off the land at will) were told that their leases would not be renewed.

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The farmers all belonged to United Agricultural Workers and their union, headed in this area by Harry Koger of Memphis, promptly went into action with protests to State Farm Ssecurity Director Hudson Wren. Koger told Wren that it was "brutal and inhuman" to drive families off the land at this time of year when none could find another place to go. The order "to git" followed a union protest, in which the seven took part, over unfairness of AAA payments and left no doubt that the real reason was because the project supervisor hated the union.

But not content to let the matter rest on their own protests alone, Koger took the case before the Memphis Area Council of the CIO. The unionists, made up of river boatmen of the National Maritime Union, saw mill hands and timbermen of the International Woodworkers Union, rubber workers from the big Firestone plant, newspaper writers and commercial people of the Memphis Newspaper Guild and several others, wrote a letter to the bigwigs of the FSA in Washington and told them that they were 100 per cent behind the farmers in the fight to save their homes.

These were the results in short order:

1. Mr. Wren, who had never before shown quite such sudde interest in the Missco people, wrote a letter to Project Supervisor Carlton Jerry warning him that all such discrimination must end and that those injured by it must be restored to their former tenure.

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2. The people scheduled for eviction are already being notified by Mr. Jerry that it was all a mistake and they can keep their places. He hopes they will just "forget it." But they won't forget this lesson in how organized farmers and city workers can team up to pull a load neither could pull alone.

Chief of Police Holman Mabry issued similar statements, and said that the state police would be called to aid if necessary.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

No Warning Sign Found At Jonesboro

SEP 2 1941

JONESBORO, Ark., Sept. 2.—While a rumor spread among Jonesboro negroes that a sign had been posted warning them against picking cotton at less than $1.75 a hundred pounds, a thorough investigation by city and county officers Tuesday failed to reveal any basis for the rumors.

Several planters reported that negrose employed as cotton pickers told them of the warning and asked that they be protected from any measures that might be taken against them.

Sheriff W. T. Lane issued a broad guarantee to all cotton pickers that his office would provide complete protection under any circumstances.

"While we do not have any evidence that these reports are more than the wildest rumors,' the sheriff said, "we still are ready to cope with any situation which may develop for protestion, even if it should require the adding of deputies to the sheriff force."

SEP 3 1941

Mayor Herbert J. Bosler and

4-1941

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

Connecticut Tobacco Fields

APR 12 1941

With the labor reservoir depleted, due to defense work, Connecticut faces the possibility of importing 1,000 colored workers this summer to work in tobacco fields.

APR 12 1941

The tobacco crop usually requires 10,000 workers, 6,000 of whom are transient whites, imported from the South, who spend their pay as fast as they earn it and, when stranded, go on relief.

Of course, we hope that by summer colored people can have defense jobs too, and no time to labor in Connecticut's tobacco fields.

Pensacola, Fla. Journal
January 12, 1941

39 Negroes Get Plantation Jobs

Another Truck Will Go to Clewiston

Thirty-nine negroes took advantage of the recent employment opportunity announced by the Pensacola office of the Florida state employment service, according to John H. Boschen, manager.

These men, some from Pensacola and some from Crestview, left last Tuesday on a truck, for work with the United States Sugar corporation on their plantation at Clewiston.

Since then, a number of men have requested that another trip be arranged so that those who were unable to leave last Tuesday might be permitted to secure this employment also.

One of the men who went to Clewiston last week was called back to Pensacola to arrange some personal business, and his report as to working conditions at the plantation has been largely responsible for the additional requests. He came to the employment service office Friday and gave Boschen an eyewitness account of his experiences at Clewiston, stating that living conditions were excellent and that even such luxuries as hot and cold showers were provided for the workers. He said that he hoped another trip could be arranged, and wanted to make sure that he would be included.

Boschen stated that another truck would leave 400 South Palafox street Tuesday morning, January 14, at nine o'clock, and will stop at the court house in Milton, leaving there at 10 o'clock, and leaving the courthouse in Crestview at 11.30 the same day.

Word has been received that women in cane cutters' families would also be acceptable for such tasks as hoeing or day work. Unemployed Negroes, between 18 and 50 years of age may be employed, but Boschen stressed that they must be in good physical condition.

Orlando, Fla., Morning Sentinel
April 20, 1941

Average Daily Income Of Griffin Park Negro Tenants Only 39 Cents

The average income per day per person of those in the Griffin Park negro housing project was disclosed yesterday as only 39 cents.

Total persons in the project is 639, composed of 346 adults and 293 children. Lowest yearly income was revealed as $218 and highest at $926. Average weekly income of families is $10.10.

Twenty-one of the tenants work for relief agencies. Greatest number of the families occupying the units, 56, are in an income bracket of from $500 to $600 per year while only two families are in the bracket from $900 to $926.

It was also disclosed that no applicant has been refused admission to the project due to insufficient income. One hundered per cent occupancy has been maintained since completion, it was pointed out. The authority has limited income of tenants to 90 per cent of the statutatory maximum income limit at time of admission.

Atlanta Ga Journal
February 9, 1941

SATISFIED WORKERS KEY TO GOOD FARM PROGRAM

Mutual Interest of Owner And Tenant Is Stressed

THOMSON, Ga.—Successful farming under a share-cropping system demands a close understanding between landlord and worker on problems of mutual interest, declares Paul A. Bowden, Thomson businessman and farmer.

For years, Mr. Bowden has cultivated hundreds of acres of land under this system and has found it profitable both for himself and for those who work with him. Some of his workers have lived on the same place for as long as 30 and 35 years, and the average is probably 15 years for each family.

His success lies not in an overbearing attitude toward those who labor on his farms, but in the development among workers of a feeling of admiration and respect for the landowner, and a complete understanding on financial obligations.

Cropper Must Profit First

Mr. Bowden believes that a share-cropper must first profit if a landowner is to make money. He holds that a satisfied worker is essential to successful farming, and while requiring his croppers to fulfill their duties and obligations, he makes every effort to make life attractive for them.

At present this landowner has about 60 families who operate a combined total of 75 plows. Most of these are Negroes who work on halves. Under the system, the landlord furnishes the land, workstock, feed, half the fertilizer, and half the seed. The cropper supplies the labor and the remainder of the fertilizer and seed. The two divide the harvest in halves.

Mr. Bowden does not require it of his croppers, but he encourages them in a live-at-home program. Each family is given a garden plot, and land for planting patches of peanuts, watermelons, potatoes and cane. Those who want them are given free use of dairy cows and pastures, and all are urged to grow hogs and have their own chickens.

All financial transactions are thoroughly understood by each party. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Bowden has a conference with each cropper, and the two evaluate his needs, his probable production, and the supplies he will need during the year.

No Commissaries

On the basis of their agreement, the cropper is advanced a specific amount the first of each month by check which he can spend where he pleases. Mr. Bowden abhors commissaries, and contends that any system through which an operator secures unfair advantage of his workers should be condemned.

Fertilizer, a major item of expense on any share-cropper's operation, is bought at the lowest cash prices, and billed to the cropper accordingly. A flat interest rate of 4 cents on the dollar is charged for advances, both on supplies and fertilizer.

When settlements are made, duplicate statements are given landlord and sharecropper by Mr. Bowden's bookkeeper, and the cropper is required to okay every item which has been charged to him. At harvest time, the worker is allowed to sell his own cotton with the idea of creating a spirit of self-reliance.

In the operation of his farms, Mr. Bowden maintains several farm supervisors who direct the share-croppers in cultivation of land. They require planting of certain soil-building legumes, rotation of crops, and good farm management. The land is not exploited, but is handled in such a way to give the cropper sufficient cash crops and at the same time build the fertility of the soil.

Good Homes Provided

This landowner believes a farm worker should be given a good dwelling, and while his houses are not fine, they are well-built, substantial structures, far above the average Negro farm house.

"I believe most of my farm laborers are happy," he declares. "I am strongly opposed to those theorists who condemn the Southland for its share-cropping system. I know there are abuses, but I believe the average family on a Georgia farm is much more satisfied and probably much better cared for than the residents of tenement districts in our large industrial centers."

Asheville, Ala., Aegis
February 6, 1941

LANDLORD-TENANT PLAN

From Heard Among The Herds in Country Gentleman February

Many landowners in the Southern States are seeking a plan which will permit them to retain their Negro labor now that cotton production is definitely curtailed due to a limited export market.

W. H. Suddeth, of Starkville, Miss., has worked out one solution to this problem with dairy cows. On 890 acres of land he is milking over 240 grade cows and showing a profit for himself and his Negro tenants with milk selling at $1.25 to $1.40 per hundrnd pounds. Mr. Suddeth furnishes the land, a simple milking shed, the cows and the feed. The nine tenants have units of from twenty to thirty cows each which they milk, and raise the heifer calves. The tenants receive one quarter of the milk check and Mr. Sudduth receives three quarters Tenants are paid extra for labor in produeing hay, mowing pastures or other farm work. From three to five acres of cotton are produced by each tenant on halves, that furnishes employment for the women and the children. In addition, Mr. Sudduth encourages each tenant to have a garden and to produce two or three hogs for the home use. Pasture, hay and cottonseed meal are the main feeds used.

During the past year Mr. Sudduth netted $33 per cow, or approximately $8000, as his share of the milk checks and in addition sold over $2000 worth of surplus dairy cows.

Consider this statement carefully—these Negro tenants netted more cash income last year than the average Alabama farmer grossed; $500 to $600 was their range of net income. They own no equipment, just milk cows and work on the farm.

Can more of our Southern landowners follow such aplanb

—F. W. Burns.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

Worthy Of His Hire

One of the most crying scandals in our democracy is, as he himself would express it, the "fix" the agricultural laborer is in. Whether he be a migrant or a casual "hand" attached to some particular farm, his wages are the lowest in the nation, his hours the longest and he enjoys an absolute minimum of legislative protection.

Except for the workers in sugar beet and cane fields, whose wage rates and other conditions of employment are established at a reasonable standard of decency under the agricultural adjustment act of 1938 which wisely linked protection of the laborer with protection of the landowner through quota restrictions, day laborers on the nation's farms are protected neither by the government nor by any other agency, except in a few scattered instances.

Wages of 60 and 75 cents a day are the common "going-rates" in many Southern farming areas—figuring out as low as 5 cents an hour for the usual "can till can't" working day—or one-sixth of the bedrock minimum established for Southern unskilled industrial workers. Women and children work on even more meager terms, to piece out the paltry earnings of the men folks and keep the family on the borderline of existence.

We now learn that a bill has been introduced in Congress by Senator Langer, of North Dakota, which would prohibit child labor on farms—exempting the operator's own children if he desired to employ them—and would require the payment of fair minimum wages to laborers, the provisions of the bill to apply to all producers sharing in government benefit payments. This bill seems a proper complement to the bill just passed by Congress which substantially increases government loans on major farm crops.

It has been alleged—often justifiably—by land-owners that they could not afford to pay their laborers American wages because of the depressed prices of their products. Now with the greatly enhanced values of these products in view, it is only just to devise some federal machinery which will operate to assure the laborer of his fair share of the value which he has helped to create.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

Poor Man's Cotton Picker Invented By Restaurateur

APR 20 1941

By WALTER DURHAM

Charles C. Ritnour is a tall, thin cigar-smoking restaurant proprietor, who spends his business hours joking with customers and his leisure tinkering with tools and inventing useful mechanical devices.

Mr. Ritnour, whose restaurant and workshop is at 710 Union, after months of experimenting, has applied for a patent on a mechanical cotton picker designed especially for the 20 to 100-acre farmer of limited means. Developed on a wholly different design from the Rust and St. Louis cotton picking machines, Mr. Ritnour's picker operates on the same principle as a vacuum cleaner, and is really a mechanical hand for a human picker.

"Poor Man's Picker"

"Unlike other mechanical pickers, all of which have been designed for use on large plantations, my machine is a poor man's cotton picker—a sort of cotton picking flivver," Mr. Ritnour said. "Its first cost will be low and the upkeep negligible."

If produced in quantity, the machine will retail for about $200, the inventor said. It will operate 10 hours on one gallon of gasoline.

Mounted on pneumatic tires and weighing less than 150 pounds, the picker can be operated by one man and will harvest as much cotton as three ordinary pickers, or about 650 pounds a day, Mr. Ritnour explained. The operator stands erect, eliminating backache.

Only 14 Inches Wide

Powered by a thre-fourths horsepower, air-cooled motor, the machine picks cotton from the front through a nine-foot flexible conduit, the two-inch muzzle of which is guarded by a sawtooth choker to prevent cotton bolls and trash from being mixed with the staple. The cotton then paasses through a suction fan into a canvas bag mounted on the framework. The bag has a number of grommets to allow air to circulate and carry off the dust.

The machine is only 14 inches wide and is drawn between the rows by the operator, who can pick two rows as he moves along. Unopened bolls are not damaged by the operation.

APR 20 1941

Mr. Ritnour cited a number of reasons why he believes the picker will prove ecnomocially practical. A blower on the machine, he said, eliminates much of the dirt. Thus, not only is the grade of the cotton improved, but much of the moisture is eliminated from the staple by the air-blast in the suction hose. Considerable loss from staining is thereby averted, he explained.

"Most cotton farmers have enough family labor to cultivate their crop, but few have enough pickers to harvest it when it opens," Mr. Ritnour said. "This means that they have to hire extra pickers just when other planters are anxious to get out their crop. The result is that some of the cotton must remain in the field and deteriorate in quality, thus bringing the farmer lower prices for his staple. My machine will enable the cotton grower to pick his cotton when it should be picked."

Mr. Ritnour said the picker can be used wherever a plow can operate. Since it does not injure the plant, it can harvest the middle and top crop, as well as the bottom. The machine is simple, has few parts to get out of order, and can be operated by anyone. It can pick in wet weather or dry, in hill or bottom country, and in any type of cotton, the inventor asserted.

May Solve Problems

"By using this type of picker the planter should be able to pay his workers a higher wage," Mr. Ritnour said, explaining that any displacement of labor would be in the ranks of women and children.

"It won't do away with the use of unskilled labor for picking cotton, but it will get out the crop faster, better and earlier," he declared. "It should make cotton picking appeal to a different class of labor, which eventually may be a step toward solving one of the South's major agricultural problems."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Tractors Shoving Tenants Off South's Plantations

Research Survey Shows Big Shift To Wage Labor

JAN 24 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(SNS)—A WPA research study released Thursday by Howard O. Hunter, Acting Commissioner of Work Projects, reports a recent increase in the size of Southern plantations and a shift to wage labor at the expense of tenants.

These and other "rapid and significant agricultural changes," including mechanization, are cited to explain in part the continued widespread unemployment and underemployment, with resultant need for relief, in the rural South.

DEFENSE NO AID

The report, "The Plantation South, 1934-1937," presents a picture of cotton and tobacco plantations which is applicable today. Corrington Gill, Assistant Commissioner in charge of research, statistics and finance, explained that cotton and tobacco planters do not expect the defense program to improve their economic condition significantly.

To analyze recent changes, the WPA Division of Research resurveyed 246 plantations, with nearly 4,000 resident tenant and laborer families, which it had studied three years previously. Important changes, affecting the entire economy of the Plantation South, were found to have occurred between 1934 and 1937.

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Plantations increased in size by six per cent to an average of 1,014 acres, with a 14 per cent gain in cultivated area to an average of 477 acres.

Livestock increased greatly, the number of hogs nearly doubling. There were 75 per cent more cows and 25 per cent more horses and mules.

The number of resident worker families per 1,000 crop-acres decreased from 37 to 34, or eight per cent.

INCOME AVERAGES $400

The report states that the expansion, together with an exceptionally good season, resulted in 1937 in one of the South's largest cotton crops, with landlords' cash incomes 40 per cent greater and tenants' net incomes 10 per cent greater than in 1934. The income of tenants and croppers in 1937, however, averaged only about $400, including goods for home consumption. It is noted that in the following year a rapid fall in cotton prices reduced employment and wages with resultant expansion of relief rolls.

Increased use of tractors was reported in most sections of the Cotton Belt, a change directly associated with the increase in the proportion of cropland and of cotton acreage operated with wage labor. On 131 of the 246 plantations power was provided by both work stock and tractors. Nearly half of those with tractors had only one of these machines. Two plantations were entirely mechanized. Cotton, more than other major crops, was found to have resisted the general trend toward mechanization.

INTEREST IS HIGH

Subsistence advances were made by landlords to croppers and share tenants for seven months on the average in 1937 and increased to $14.50 from a monthly average of $13.70 in 1934. Interest rates on an annual basis averaged 36 per cent in 1937, or two or three times the rates paid by the planters for short-term credit.

Such heavy charges, the report says, increases the difficulties of tenants in raising their tenure status and operates against diversification of crops because tenants must concentrate on cash crops in order to meet their obligations.

Problems arising in connection with changes in agricultural income, with increased mechanization and with variations in labor requirements are basic factors in the persistence of relief needs which far exceed the available facilities for alleviating distress, the report concludes.

JAN 24 1941

NEED BROAD PROGRAM

"In the rural South, moreover both those on relief and their non-relief neighbors are disadvantaged with respect to living conditions and community institutions," said Mr. Gill. "The problems of rural living in the South all reflect the economic situation and emphasize the need for broad programs of economic and social reconstruction. Important steps in this direction have been taken in recent years through submarginal land retirement, soil conservation, promotion of family-sized farms and farm ownership by the Farm Security Administration, the experimental promotion of cooperative farm enterprises, increased crop diversification, credit reform, tenancy reform, and the Federal work program.

JAN 24 1941

Much remains to be done along all of these lines, however, and no Federal action has yet been taken for equalizing the opportunities in rural areas as compared with urban areas for educational and public health facilities or for low-income housing. Increasing attention to these problems, however, and substantial agreement as to the things which need to be done make it safe to predict that over a period of time major achievements will result."

The study was conducted under the supervision of Howard B. Myers, WPA Director of Research. It was directed by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and the report was written by W. C. Holley and Ellen Winston.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

TENANT FARMER SECURITY SOUGHT

FEB 3 1941

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Feb. 2—(AP)—Enactment of a measure to bring sharecroppers and tenant farmers under the Federal Social Security program was urged Sunday at the closing session of the seventh annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

A resolution adopted at the meeting asked "immediate enactment by members of Congress to bring all American labor, including sharecroppers and tenant farmers, under the Social Security law, including old age pensions, child welfare and unemployment compensation."

J. R. Butler, Memphis, was re-elected president of the union, but told delegates he was considering resigning the post "because I feel I cannot work with another officer you have elected." Butler said he differed with the officer, whom he declined to name, on a matter of policy.

F. R. Betton, Cotton Plant, Ark., was named vice president, and H. L. Mitchell, Memphis, secretary.

New members of the executive council are D. A. Griffin, Fair Oak, Ark.; W. R. Purcell, Muskogee, Okla.; J. E. Clayton, Houston, Tex.; B. S. Beck, Gobler, Mo.; Roy Parks, Portageville, Mo.; Noah Graham, Bragg City, Mo.; J. F. Hynds, Forrest City, and W. M. Tanner, Kennett, Mo.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

Justice to the Tenants

MAR 23 1941

Just how much shenanigan has been going on among Georgia farmers to beat their tenants or sharecroppers out of their proportion of government bounties we do not know, but the agricultural extension service evidently finds there is enough of it to justify a solemn warning that such irregular practices will result in forfeiture of 1941 parity and conservation payments by those who are responsible.

Each person who shares in the cotton crop on the farm is entitled to AAA payments under provisions of the farm program, the administrative officer explained. The same rule applies to persons entitled to share in other crops for which allotments are established, including tobacco, peanuts, and commercial vegetables, he said.

MAR 23 1941

We feel sure that the vast majority of Georgia farmers have not been guilty of these irregular practices, but to whatever extent they prevail it is only proper that the Department of Agriculture should take drasctic measures.

Montgomery, Ala. Advertiser
February 16, 1941

COMPLIMENT FOR ATTICUS

Editor, The Advertiser:

I am in a complimenting humor this morning; sunshine magnificent; weather glorious. And so is Atticus. I have just finished his article in the paper of the day. Quite as good as anything he ever wrote and he always writes well. He assumes the thesis I have long asserted: That cotton is of no value to the producer. Debates in Convention of 1787 show that cotton needed cheap labor. Demand for cheap labor triumphed. Georgia and South Carolina triumphed; attempt at a new and better government needed their votes. And South then came to the pernicious conclusion that cheap labor was an asset.

The West, with high labor progressed; the South with cheap labor decayed. If a reader would see the decay, let him get "Georgia Scenes" and read the tales as told by Longstreet. Negroes soon became valuable only as livestock. In Dred Scott case Supreme Court decided he was but livestock.

The stronger North reversed the decision at dreadful Appomattox—after the South had exhausted men and treasure in futile struggle; best she had.

I wish I could persuade the reader to get Geographic Magazine for February and read up on cotton; magnificent plant, grown for profit of manufacturer; to make wealth for New England and poverty for the South; granting profit to the few.

Its only virtue has been that it always had cash value; and gave money for the successful planter to spend at Saratoga and other points north.

There are other fine points in the article of Atticus; but allowed space prevents present notice. I wish I had a paper to myself.

Hit cotton again, Atticus. Blows quite as good as those of our Joe Louis. Down the Brute and make producer feed himself.

Success to effort!

W. H. TAYLOE.

Uniontown,

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

SAYS NO COMPROMISE IN QUEST FOR JOBS IS NEGRO'S MOTTO

MAR 14 1941

Right to Work Should Be Government's Guarantee to All Citizens

By Emmett J. Scott

WASHINGTON, D. C.—A few months ago, the American people were in the midst of a bitter Presidential campaign. Both candidates were exhorting the people to trust their pledges, their promises, their assurances.

It was a period of tumult, of shouting, of great emotionalism.

Nerves were taut. Much bitterness abounded. Tempers flared. The short and ugly word found use nearly every day. Excitement was running high.

In the midst of all this turmoil, with both parties bidding for its support, the Negro group found itself overwhelmed by a great uncertainty as to what the future held in store for it, and as to the course it should follow.

With relief—continued relief—offered by one candidate, and jobs, jobs, by other, this Negro group oscillated between the two great parties, trying to reach a wise decision.

MAR 14 1941

Undoubtedly, it was a period in which a well-considered, long-range decision could not be reached. The agitations of the hour prevented that relaxed study and contemplation the subject deserved.

Voted For New Deal

In the great industrial cities where so many thousands of the Colored people have been condemned to sub-marginal existence on relief rolls, and denied employment in industry, they embraced the pittances of relief, apparently because of the fear, after eight years of unemployment, that the miracle of a job was just too much to expect. Again, the group, in large part, voted with and for the New Deal.

And then came the National Defense Program with its great preparations, the hiring of thousands and millions of men—surely, it was thought, the day of industrial-employment-redemption had come.

But, no The same old prejudices and discriminations were trotted out, or rather continued.

And that is why Negro-America is so bestirred at this time. That is why our representative men and women are speaking out, and refusing to be "hushed up" by hesitant, pussy-footed appeasers of the gods of Perjudice and Racial Discrimination.

MAR 14 1941

No Compromise On This Issue

They are refusing to compromise on this issue. They are daring to insist in this hour of national peril that these rank prejudices be subordinated to national security, and that their cause be considered along with the propitiations being made to organized and unorganized labor and other class groups.

They know that access to employment in industry, financed by Government, for national preservation should be made as sure for htem as for these other groups.

They know that Negro manpower is being conscripted by Government, and that, if the worst comes, the blood of their youth and spilled as by others called to Army young manhood will be as freely service.

They know it is rank insult to be telling them to be "good", and all of their troubles will be ended, their problems solved after the emergency passes.

They know that this same "apple sauce" was offered them 23 years ago, and that only disillusion and terror and all the humiliations of spirit and of citizenship have been their portion since.

And that is why, in this righteous hour, they are determined to contest every present and added oppression forced upon them.

Job Equality Demanded

Everywhere able-bodied men are being called to Army camps—why not in Industry also? they are asking.

MAR 14 1941

The self-respect, the individual liberty of this group rejects the notion that, as usual, they are still to be the last hired as they are always the first fired.

One of the candidates for the Presidency last September stated that "the Negro has little hope under this present un-American practice if he must wait until the Whites have all been employed" before he can expect any consideration.

Mrs. Roosevelt, in speaking at Petersburg, Virginia, two weeks ago, offered the poor hope that "now that increased jobs are being created," opportunities may soon be offered the Negro group.

Must we forever wait, wait? Must we forever be on the scaffold while others ornament the throne?

We are not willing that this shall be Every instinct of self-preservation urges us to a course of action that claims the right to a fair consideration of our just claims and deserts now in connection with every long-range program for national defense—the privilege and right of every individual in this nation of ours.

Guardian
Boston, Mass.

Expose Injustice To U. S. Sharecroppers

MAR 15 1941

STIRRING MEET HELD AT COPLEY PLAZA

The oft suppressed facts concerning the tragic fate of U. S. sharecroppers echoed and re-echoed throughout the Sheraton Room of the Copley Plaza Hotel here last Saturday afternoon during the well attended luncheon of the Boston Committee, National Sharecroppers union.

NOT ALL COLORED

It was revealed that a gift of $100 was far more than the average sharecropper family made in a year. One description of the subject embraced them all as "a wasted land and a wasted people. Only a part of them are colored and not all, as is sometimes believed. Poor and degraded to the level of serfs, without land or a voice in the government, these millions of people, with the highest birthrate in America midst, loom today as a challenge to and with more American youth in their Democracy and a fertile field for subversive and revolutionary propaganda unless their lot is made better.

RACES CO-OPERATE

Intentionally or otherwise, the speakers revealed the best co-operative planning at present in the country is going on between white and colored in the sharecropper union movement which began in 1934 with the formation of the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union and which even in the very deep south brings the white and colored together in their fight against serfdom, political slavery and starvation.

MAR 15 1941

Speakers included Arthur S. Raper, Ph.D., co-author of "Sharecroppers All"; Mrs. William B. Oliver, Pres. Mass. Federation of Women's Church Societies; Mr. Botes, author and adventurer, and other prominent citizens.

The Boston officers are Rev. Alfred Bliss, chairman; Prof. Albert Sprague Coolidge, treasurer; Dorothy A. Hickie, sec., and Frank Manning, Dr. Organization.

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

Farmers Told To 'Strike' for More Money

MAR 20 1941

Suggested To Gain Larger Share of Defense Cash

WASHINGTON, March 19.—(AP) Senators Bankhead, Democrat, Alabama, and Smith, Democrat, South Carolina, today suggested a general "strike" by farmers as a possible means of gaining agriculture a larger share of the money distributed by national defense spending.

MAR 20 1941

The suggestion came at a hearing of the Senate Agriculture Committee after Secretary of Agriculture Wickard refused to support a proposal for government loans to peg prices of cotton, wheat, corn and tobacco at higher levels.

Bankhead developed by questioning Wickard that huge surpluses of cotton and wheat had piled up despite farmer co-operation with government programs to reduce production.

Smith, chairman of the Agriculture Committee, said farmers had followed "every suggestion of this administration by reducing acreage of cotton, wheat, corn and tobacco and now the government is going to leave them at the mercy of market conditions."

"Wouldn't you like to see them strike for a year?" asked Senator Bankhead.

MAR 20 1941

"I certainly would," Senator Smith agreed.

4-1941

GEORGIA

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

U. S. Indicts 2 On Charge Of 'Peonage'

Rare Action Is Brought In Chicago Against Georgia Men

MAY 31 1941

CHICAGO, May 29.— (AP) —Two Georgians, William T. Cunningham, an Oglethorpe County planter, and Hamilton McWhorter, Lexington lawyer and former president of the Georgia Senate—were named in Federal indictments today charging conspiracy to "hold negroes in a condition of peonage and slavery."

The rare action was brought under the civil rights statute and charged the defendants conspired to deprive six negroes, now in Chicago, of their civil rights under the 13th amendment which guarantees them freedom from slavery.

A statement from the district attorney's office said the indictment charged that for many years Cunningham had enslaved negroes on his plantations, inducing them to come to work by promises of wages and by getting them out of jail or off the chain gang. Once on the plantations, the negroes were no longer free. They received no wages and Cunningham instilled in them the fear of running away by lashing them with straps and causing them to be imprisoned or sent to a Georgia chain gang if they attempted to run away."

The three counts in the indictment carry a maximum penalty, on conviction, of 14 years imprisonment and $25,000 fine.

Dist. Atty. J. Albert Woll said the Federal Court in this district had jurisdiction because of overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy allegedly committed in Chicago.

The indictment charged that Cunningham and McWhorter came to Chicago in 1939 with extradition warrants and attempted to arrest three negroes who had escaped from Cunningham's Sandy Cross plantation. The trio was charged with burglary but the indictment alleged that the sole purpose of the defendants was to return the negroes to peonage and slavery.

MAY 30 1941

Woll said he understood the crime charged against the negroes — Otis Woods, Doc Woods and Solomon McCannon—was the theft of two bushels of corn from Cunningham's barn in December, 1935, but that they had remained on the plantation for a year after the alleged theft and Cunningham did not cause their indictment until after they had fled.

The late Gov. Horner denied their extradition to Georgia after the case was fought by Atty. William Henry Huff who subsequently founded the Abolish Peonage Committee to carry on the fight.

Woll said that Edward Raines, now a private in the United States Army, Clyde Smith and Ella Smith, also were named as fugitive negroes and that Cunningham sought to cause their arrest also in Chicago although he had no warrants for them.

At his residence in Lexington, McWhorter said "there is not any foundation" for the indictment.

McWhorter, president of the Georgia Senate in 1933-35, said he went to Chicago as the legal representative of the Oglethorpe County sheriff to seek the extradition of the three negroes.

He said extradition papers granted by the governor of Illinois were withdrawn later and that the peonage charges were brought "to counter" the attempt to return the negroes to face their indictment for burglary. "It's just some of that Chicago stuff," he remarked.

McWhorter said his only connection with the case was that of an attorney for the sheriff, adding he "wouldn't know the negroes if I saw them" and asserting they never had worked for him.

Cunningham, he said, was the prosecutor of the burglary charges and the employer of the negroes. Cunningham, who also lives in Lexington, said there was "no basis" for the charges and declined to comment further.

MAY 30 1941

Monroe, Ga., News
August 19, 1941

WELL AND REASONABLE

If the negro, accredited as making the best farm hand that there is, when given proper training and is inclined to want to work, is to remain in among us (and we see no way of his escape) it should behoove every landlord who uses him as an employee, to grant him every encouragement, within the bounds of reason. It has not been in my day, neither yours, dear readers, that the negro of our section has expected to have equal rights and privileges with the white people in their homes or anywhere else. They'll never covet that attitude.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

Indict Two Georgians For Peonage

MAY 30 1941

Planter and Former State Senator Are Named in Federal Charge

CHICAGO, May 29.—Two Georgians—William T. Cunningham, an Oglethorpe County planter, and Hamilton McWhorter, Lexington lawyer and former president of the Georgia Senate—were named in federal indictments today charging conspiracy to "hold Negroes in a condition of peonage and slavery."

The action was brought under the civil rights statute and charged the defendants conspired to deprive six colored persons, now in Chicago, of their civil rights under the Thirteenth Amendment which guarantees freedom from slavery.

Today's indictments climaxed a three-year fight by the Chicago office of the International Labor Defense to bring the indicted men to trial for peonage.

Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois

URGE AID TO KEEP NEGROES ON THE FARM

SEP 28 1941

SAVANNAH, Ga., Sept. 25 — (ANP)—President Benjamin F. Hubert, Georgia State college, issued an urgent plea here Tuesday for national, state and local aid to keep Negroes on the farm. His appeal was directed to agricultural leaders, with a suggestion that a study of individual family needs be made as a forerunner for setting up a program which will keep the Negro farmer on his farm.

In many instances, Dr. Hubert said, drought followed by excessive rainfalls bring about the small yield of food and feed crops in Georgia this year, especially on small farms. Many farms make less than 500 pounds of lint cotton and where farms are worked by tenants or sharecroppers, it will require much more than that amount to satisfy the landlord for his interest in the year's farm program.

Hubert asserted that recently a group seeking to better the conditions had been advised by federal officials that they could not grow tobacco or peanuts on their farms. This presented a serious question to many Negro farm families who struggle for years trying to hold small plots of land.

SEP 28 1941

"Peas and potatoes may satisfy the older people," Dr. Hubert said, "but the children want cash. They will leave and go elsewhere seeking this ready cash if they cannot find it on the farm."

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

Georgia Sheet Lauds Jurist

Supports Refusal To Extradite Whites For Chi Trial

OCT 11 1941

LEXINGTON, Ga.—Appearing in the September 25 edition of the Oglethorpe Echo, local white daily, was a resolution by the grand jury branding false the charges of peonage in upper Oglethorpe County, and upholding Judge Bascom Deavers of the middle district court of Georgia in his refusal to extradite Hamilton McWhorter and William Tolliver Cunningham, white, for trial in Chicago.

Tolliver and Cunningham were charged with keeping Negroes in conditions of slavery and peonage, and Atty. William Henry Huff, of the Abolish Peonage Committee, had sought to have them extradited to Chicago for trial. However, Judge Deaver ruled against the peonage lawyer and refused to release McWhorter and Cunningham to the Chicago court.

Holding that Judge Deaver had handed down a true and correct decision, the resolution said, "We also wish to commend that fearless southern gentleman, Judge Bascom Deaver, of the middle district of Georgia, for his action in the case, to the end that true justice would be served."

OCT 11 1941

Protest was also registered by the grand jury against the book, "Our Native Land," written by Anna Louis Strong. It is their contention that the book "holds the county up to ridicule, being scurrilous, malicious and without basis in fact." The county grand jury also branded it as "unfit reading for people of the county."

Helpless Farmer Returned

Savannah Journal
Savannah, Ga.
MAY 3 1941

Federal Probe Is Sought By Committee

CHICAGO—(ANP)—Another instance of peonage in Oglethorpe county, Georgia, was reported to Atty. William Henry Huff, chief counsel for the Abolish Peonage committee of this city who is making determined efforts to have actino taken in the matter by federal investigators.

MAY 3 1941

The case of a helpless farmhand who ran away to Atlanta to escape being flogged for making a fire in the field of his employer, on a cold day and who was brought back to Oglethorpe county and jailed was bared to the peonage committee here by a white informant whose identity is known, The employer went to the post office obtained a letter written by the farm hand to his wife, opened it and when the sharecropper was returned had him imprisoned along with his wife in the Lexington jail, according to the report.

The Abolish Peonage committee counsel recalled charges made against another employer of the same Georgia county for opening a letter sent to a Negro school teacher which contained a money order sent by Chicago relatives of Solomon McCannon for his escape from the plantation. Atty. Huff, telling of the committees determination to have federal intervention in the new case said "Oglethorpe county, Ga., must be made to know that it is a part of the United States."

MAY 3 1941

Still another instance of maltreatment was disclosed in an informant's letter. An elderly worker on a plantation in Lexington, Oglethorpe county, made inquiries about a government check in which he was entitled to share be be told that unless he agreed to remain on his plantation he would not get any of the $15 allegedly owed him. When ti was liscovered that the elderly man had tried to investigate the conditions pertaining to the payment of the check he was run him off the plantation, according to the informant.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

Farm Slaves

APR 30 1941

Editor The Telegraph:

I read in The Telegraph last week that there was a shortage of farm labor in Bibb and many other counties, due to their leaving the farm and going to the city to work at the many public jobs now available.

Sometimes I think it might be a good thing for the country if there was enough public jobs for every farm laborer, white and colored, instead of his having to toil and suffer on these big 200 to 2,500-acre farms, living in homes that are as bad or worse than any large city slum district in the United States.

It doesn't make any difference if cotton is selling for seven cents per pound, or 20 cents; or if white meat is 10 or 25 cents per pound, the poor white man and Negro farm labor can expect about the same wages . . . from 60 to 75 cents for 10 to 14 hours of the tiresomest, hardest work there is.

If one of them gets the courage to ask for a 10 or 15 cents per day raise or to put a porch or a new top on the house, the boss will get mad and raise the devil and tell the poor man to get him aother place if he doesn't like it there.

APR 30 1941

But what's the use changing? It's practically the same anywhere he might go. Or he might tell him a sad tale like this: I'm paying you all I can . . . not making anything, can't get anything for my cotton and peanuts, sorry but you'll have to wait till times get better before I can repair your house. But pretty soon he'll sell a big bunch of hogs or get a big land rental check from the government. Well, he decides that new Ford car he bought in 1940 just won't do. He must have a new 1941 . . . more expensive one. He doesn't think about his hired man who doesn't own a car and couldn't operate one if he did with wages 75 cents per day. Let him walk, he doesn't need to go anywhere except to the field by sun-up every morning.

APR 30 1941

Talk about slavery days of 1861 but they wold not have been much worse than the so-called farm labor days of 1941. It's enough to make old Abe Lincoln turn in his grave.

Elko. A TRACTOR DRIVER.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Say Georgia Men Shirk Peon Trial

AUG 16 1941

The Hamilton McWhorter Jr., who was indicted by a grand jury in Chicago May 29 on charges of "peonage and slavery" for attempting to force Negroes back to a farm in Georgia on false charges, has recently been elected president of the Northern (Georgia) Bar association, with testimonials of character and service from his associates.

W. T. Cunningham, to whom the peonage farm belongs, and who was indicted along with McWhorter, has recently claimed "heart trouble." It is the belief of the Abolish Peonage committee, whose counsel is Atty. William Henry Huff, that Cunningham's illness is a scheme to avoid having to come back to Chicago for trial.

A letter from Georgia by a friend of the Abolish Peonage committee states:

AUG 16 1941

"I was in Athens, Ga., on Saturday, May 31, and heard people on the streets and in the cafes discussing the case. Also heard several of them offering bets the case would never come to trial in Chicago, and that it was just the work of that "n——— loving bunch in Chicago.'

"I don't believe there's a bit more wrong with old Cunningham than there is with me....."

4-1941
Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Clinton Clark Organizes 'Croppers Of Louisiana Into Militant Union

FEB 8 1941

OPELOUSAS, La.—Couragous, militant Clinton Clark, who has dedicated himself to the difficult task of organizing the tenant farmers of Louisiana and thus obtain for them a square deal, has succeeded in getting 250 farmers together under the banner of the Louisiana Farmers union.

Clark was arrested last August for such activities, jailed for 20 days, and then escorted across the state line and curtly told not to come back. But while speaking at a peace rally in Chicago last September, Clark declared: "I may be lynched, but I am going to return!"

The organized farmers plan to "make a living at home" by growing more garden products for canning, buy supplies cooperatively, and organize a credit union in each local.

"We don't intend to starve," Clark said. "We are going to help each other.

"In 1939 we were farming as sharecroppers," Clark related. "We had to give one fourth of the crop to the landlord. In 1940 the landlord wanted to make his share one third. The farmers refused to sign the contract to this effect."

The aroused farmers called on the Federal Security administration agent and told him their plight. The agent got the landlord to rent the plantation to the FSA. Clark states that now the farmers pay cash rent to the FSA and "we are living much better and hope to make things even better through our organization."

FEB 8 1941

The farmers union is investigating a plantation brought to the attention of Local No. 70, Legoiner, La. This plantation, the Rexmere, is fenced in with barbed wire and nobody is allowed to enter unless he has the permission of the landlord, a state senator. Before this permit is granted, the person must tell in detail (1) why he wants to enter this plantation and (2) how long he is going to be there.

A sharecropper going out must tell where he is going, for what purpose, and how long he will be gone. If a sharecropper goes hunting or fishing, he must give half of the game or fish caught to the landlord.

The landlord provides a radio and household equipment for his sharecropper families, but the sharecropper must pay for these. Yet when a sharecropper moves, he must leave these things on the plantation.

FEB 8 1941

The American flag fluttering from a pole on the plantation indicates to the 75 sharecropper families that the landlord is at home.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

La. Farmers Organize A Co-op Store

MAR 22 1941

NEW ORLEANS.—The Farmers Union members in Pointe Coupee parish under the leadership of Clinton Clark, are organizing a cooperative store. In this way the hope to save for themselves what formerly they paid to the landlord and merchants.

MAR 22 1941

Last year excessive rains ruined the cotton crop so that money is extremely scarce. They have donated chickens, calves, hogs, corn and preserves which will be sold and the proceeds used to buy the first stock of groceries.

The store itself will be first set up in the home of Siegent Caulfield, long time staunch Farmers Union worker. Others giving especially active support are Rev. William Mormon, Abraham Phillips, Snady Phillips, Willie Lyles, Ales Jenkins and Daniel Thronton.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

Louisiana Farmers Moving Ahead With Strong Organization; Workers Helping

MAR 20 1941

Sharecroppers in North Louisiana are realizing the value of organization and united action, according to Clinton Clark, Louisiana organizer.

The planters in Ponte Coupee Parish proposed to raise the planters' share of cotton from one-fourth to one-third and also to increase the planters' share of the corn crop. The organized farmers raised so much objection that the planters took their case to the Farm Security Administration office in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Farm Security made a trade with the planters under which FSA would rent the land in question at $6 per acre cash. Mr. Clark says the normal cash rental in that area is $2.50 to $3.00. (Owners have rented some of their own land back from FSA at $3.00 per acre.) Farm Security in turn rents the land to the sharecroppers at $6 per acre through an association called Farmstead-Torras Association. The Association has a charter under which it operates but the sharecropper members have not been permitted by the supervisor to look at it.

MAR 20 1941

In spite of the high rental the sharecroppers are finding this situation more tolerable than dealing with the plantation owners. Five plantations in the same area are included in the Association. The producers are permitted to sell their products where they please.

This year's government loan checks are coming late but the farmers' organization has secured a promise from the FSA authorities that checks to the farmers will all come at the same time so they can buy seed, fertilizer and other items together. Before the checks came the supervisor also made an arrangement with a wholesaler to get Irish potatoes and corn seed.

When the checks do arrive, many members have agreed to put $5 in cash out of their loan into a cooperative store which will handle supplies for the farmers. FSA has agreed to this.

MAR 20 1941

The cooperative already has $250 cash on hand, five pigs, 75 chickens and 20 barrels of corn. They have other donations of chickens, corn and pigs that have not been gathered in. Each member has agreed to give two chickens, one pig and two barrels of corn. The farmers didn't have any cash but wanted to do something with what they did have and so adopted this way of getting things started.

The cooperative has great plans for the future. There are some 600 members in the parish and out of some of the first money they got hold of they expect to put up $20 each with which to buy land for themselves. They are already looking at a 300 acre tract which they expect to buy, with additions as time goes on.

The parish boils with activity. There is a meeting somewhere every night in the week. The terror which put Mr. Clark in jail when he began organizing in another Louisiana parish has completely disappeared. The young people have clubs at which they discuss farm problems, make quilts and engage in other activities that contribute to the organization's funds.

MAR 20 1941

The farmers are banded together for the purpose of making a single contract with some gin owner. In the future they expect to build their own gin.

The farm population of Ponte Coupee Parish is at least 60 per cent Negro but there are also white locals which cooperate fully with Negro locals, and there are white and Negro speakers on the program in nearly every meeting. These farm groups are working more closely all the time with union labor in the towns.

The woman's auxiliary of the Inland Boatmen at Baton Rouge has made agreements with the Farmers' union to buy chickens, eggs and other products. The industrial workers and farmers exchange speakers on their programs weekly or more often.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Peonage Cases Are Revealed

APR 9 1941

Sharecropper's Daughter Is Threatened

WASHINGTON—(ANP)— Sharecroppers in Louisiana are still being driven from their little farms and subjected to peonage according to information from reliable sources in that state.

The latest case has to do with Rexmere plantation, owned by a state senator, where overseers are brutally mistreating Negro workers and forcing upon them all of the evils revealed in past stories and even more.

In this instance Nelson Cannady, sharecropper, and his family and friends fled from the peonage plantation after one of the men, an overseer, had hit Cannady over the head with a club and had drawn a pistol on his daughter.

According to Cannady, Charlie Smith, son of his friend, Leon Smith, went out to work one morning and the overseer wanted him to work in the water. Smith refused to work in the swamp because he had just gotten over an attack of influenza, so in the course of the discussion which followed, the overseer, a man by the name of Pond, struck Smith with a club.

APR 9 1941

SPY SYSTEMS

Intricate spy systems used on the plantation connect all parts of the huge farm and every move of the workers is carefully checked and watched. The community store has piles of bills against each worker and no one is permitted to purchase anywhere else other than

Ownership of the farm is said to be vested in one Senator Woods, a member of the state legislature, who is cognizant of the goings-on at the plantation.

At one time, recently 11 workers, including Cannady and his family and friends, fled the plantation in fear of their lives. Friends aided them to get away from the horror farm and have taken care of them ever since. APR 9 1941

But those who are still on the farm are subjected to treatment far worse than can be imagined it is reported, and the action of the overseers are well known throughout the community.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

La. Farmers To Observe Anniversary

MAY 24 1941

TORRAS, La.—The Pointe Coupee Parish Farmers union will celebrate its fourth anniversary with a huge all-day meeting at Mount Carmel church here Sunday, May 25. Several hundred people are expected to attend.

Arrangements are being made under direction of Clinton Clark, state organizer for the Farmers Union, who is well known for his efforts to build a strong organization among his people in Pointe Coupee, Natchitoches and other parishes.

MAY 24 1941

Including on the program are speakers of state and national prominence. Speaking will be Willie Dorsey, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's union (C.I.O.) in New Orleans.

Rev. Owen Whitfield, sharecropper leader of Arkansas and Missouri; Edward Strong of Birmingham, executive secretary of the Southern Negro Youth Congress; Miss Easther Cooper, administrative secretary of S.N.Y.C.; Roald Peterson, acting secretary of the La Farmers union; Dr. James Jackson of Richmond and Peter Price, both connected with the S.N.Y.C.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

Hundreds Expected At Louisiana Rally Of Farmers' Union

MAY 8 - 1941

NEW ORLEANS, La.—The Pointe Coupee Parish Farmers' Union will celebrate its fourth anniversary with an all-day gathering at Mount Carmel Baptist Church, on Sunday, May 25th, at Torras, Louisiana. Several hundred people are expected to attend.

There will be speeches by prominent Louisiana and national figures, and entertainment features, which include presentation of Langston Hughes' powerful play "Don't You Want To Be Free?"

Trucks and buses are being arranged to take people to and from the meeting. MAY 8 - 1941

The arrangements are being made under direction of Clinton Clark, militant Negro farm organizer, who has defied plantation owner terror to lead in building a strong farm organization in Pointe Coupee and neighboring parishes.

Labor organizations wil send representatives to the farm meeting and Willie Dorsey, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (CIO) in New Orleans, will be a speaker on the program.

Other speakers of Southwide and national reputation are Rev. Owen A. Whitfield, sharecropper leader in Northwest Arkansas and Southeast Missouri; Edward E. Strong, of Birmingham, executive secretary of Southern Negro Youth Congress; Miss Esther Copoer, administrative secretary SNYC; Roald Peterson acting secretary Louisiana Fermers' Union; Dr. James E. Jackson, of Richmond and Birmingham, and Peter Price, both connected with SNYC. Other prominent names will be added to the list, according to Mr. Clark.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Police Discount Alleged Assault On Cotton Picker

PEMISCOT, Mo.—(ANP) — Police officials of Pemiscot county, Mo., denied Tuesday that Roy Hall, Negro cotton picker, had been brutally beaten with sharp hammers by three men while on his way to a meeting at Wardell, Mo. This denial came on the heels of a complaint filed by Harry Koger, president of the Southern Cotton States council, CIO affiliate of United Allied Workers of America, who said Hall was enroute to a Southeast Missouri union meeting.

Koger said later that Hall was taken to jail at Wardell and efforts of CIO officials to investigate the incident were frustrated by Missouri officials, and that a union meeting at Wilson, Arkansas, was broken up that night by vigilantes. Sheriff Hale Jackson, of Mississippi county, said he had no report of trouble.

According to Marshall A. Bohannon of Wardell, Hall was charged with being drunk, disturbing the peace and tampering with an automobile in front the homes of Arthur Hopkins and Harry Thompson, white, who live three miles south of Wardell.

Released on $300 bond, made shortly after his arrest by former county judge T. R. Colege of Pascola, Mo., a prominent landowner, Hall is scheduled to appear in a hearing before Judge D. V. Kelly.

ST. LOUIS—(ANP)—Sharecropper cotton pickers fighting for a raise in pay from $1 per hundred weight won a victory over the planters and landowners, when this week, after a determined effort against the former pay scale was shown, the planters agreed to raise the pay to $1.25 per hundredweight.

This sum, however, is not in accordance with an oral agreement between the pickers and the owners. That agreement stated that the pickers were to receive a sum equal to 10 percent of the sale price of cotton. And with cotton prices rising, this would have meant a considerable raise over the old established price.

Inasmuch as a picker can pick only about a hundred pounds of cotton per day, this makes them "dollar-a-day" workers. Under the present living conditions, life was growing more and more unbearable since costs were rising and salaries or pay scales were the same.

The planters and landed gentry had blamed the government for the impasse which existed and had appealed to strong influences seeking for a compromise or at least a retention of the old dollar a day plan. However, when it was found that the pickers were adamant in their stand, the new price was mutually agreed on and the cotton pickers are ready to go after the crop in Missouri's bootheel section

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Wage Fight Is Won By Cotton Pickers

Granted Increase Of 25 Cents

CHARGE VIGILANTES ASSAULTED MAN ON WAY TO UNION HALL

PEMISCOT, Mo., Sept. 11—(ANP)—Police officials of Pemiscot county, Mo., denied Tuesday that Roy Hall, Negro cotton picker, had been brutally beaten with sharp hammers by three men while on his way to a meeting at Wardell, Mo. This denial came on the heels of a complaint filed by Harry Koger, president of the Southern Cotton States council, CIO affiliate of United Cannery, Agriculture, Packing and Allied Workers of America, who said Hall was enroute to a Southeast Missouri union meeting.

Koger said later that Hall was taken to jail at Wardell and efforts of CIO officials to investigate the incident were frustrated by Missouri officials, and that a union meeting near Wilson, Ark., was broken up that night by vigilantes. Sheriff Hale Jackson, of Mississippi county, said he had no report of trouble.

According to Marshal A. Bohannon of Wardell, Hall was charged with being drunk, disturbing the peace and tampering with an automobile in front of the homes of Arthur Hopkins and Harry Thompson, white, who live three miles south of Wardell.

Released on $300 bond, made shortly after his arrest by former county judge T. R. Colege of Pascola, Mo., a prominent landowner, Hall is scheduled to appear in a hearing before Judge D. V. Kelly.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Cotton Pickers Win Pay Increase

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 18—(By ANP) — Sharecropper cotton pickers fighting for a raise in pay from $1 per hundred weight won a victory over the planters and landowners, when last week, after a determined effort against the former pay scale was shown, the planters agreed to raise the pay to $1.25 per hundredweight.

This sum, however, is not in accordance with an oral agreement between the pickers and the owners. That agreement stated that the pickers were to receive a sum equal to 10 per cent of the sale price of cotton. And with cotton prices rising, this would have meant a considerable raise over the old established price.

Inasmuch as a picker can pick only about a 100 pounds of cotton per day, this makes them "dollar-a-day" workers. Under the present living conditions, life was growing more and more unbearable since costs were rising and salaries or pay scales were the same.

The planters and landed gentry had blamed the government for the impasse which existed and had appealed to strong influences seeking for a compromise or at least a retention of the old dollar a day plan. However, when it was found that the pickers were adamant in their stand, the new price was mutually agreed on and the cotton pickers are ready to go after the crop in Missouri's bootheel section.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Sharecroppers Week To Be Held March 2-9

MEMPHIS Tenn.—(SNS)—National Share Croppers Week has been proclaimed by the Educators Committee for March 2-9 1941. Dr. Frank P. Graham president University of North Carolina is national chairman. Dr. Mary E. Walley Mt. Holyoke College, Mass. and Major F. H. LaGuardia of New York are co-chairmans. Leading Negro educators on this committee are Dr. F. D. Patterson, president. Tuskegee Institute. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois of Atlanta University. Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University and Dr. Alain Locke of Howard University and others.

The purpose of this week is to focus attention to one of Americas sore spots so as to arouse concern. The Southern Tenant Farmers Union is carrying on this campaign of education and organization for the improvement of thin economic social and spiritual life.

MAR 3 1941

An essay contest is sponsored for college students (under graduates) on the "Relationship of Civil Liberties to the Share Croppers." Prizes of $25.00, $15.00 and $10.00 rerpectively for first second and third prizes. Essays must be of 2,0000 words typewritten on 8x11 paper bearing the name of the college and writer in the right hand corner of each age. A bibliography must be attached; bearing a post mark not later than April 5.

This essay is under the auspices of the Educators Committee National Share Croppers Week, 112 East 19th street. New York City, New York.

Guardian
Boston, Mass.

Offer Students $100 in Sharecropper Cont.

FEB 15 1941

NEW YORK—The fifth annual observance of National Sharecroppers Week, March 2-9, will once more be marked by an educational contest in the nation's high schools and colleges.

High school students will discuss the origin of the sharecropping system, or describe the conditions of the sharecroppers in a 250 word essay. Total prizes of $50. will be awarded to the four best essays. The presentation will be made at a public dinner in New York City during the Week, March 2-9. College students will discuss (2000-3000 words), with original research, the relation of civil liberties and sharecroppers. Total awards of $150. will be made for the three final selections. Outstanding educators will be the judges in the contests. All under-graduates are eligible to enter both contests.

Heading the Educators Committee are Dr. Mary E. Woolley and Dr. Abram L. Harris. Other educators on the Committee include John Dewey, William Faulkner, Charles S. Johnson, Frank Kingdon, Robert S. Lynd, Theresa Wolfson, Arthur Raper, W. E. B. DuBois. The Committee agrees with President Roosevelt that the South is the Nation's No. 1 Economic Problem, and feels that the educational process is one of the best ways of focusing attention on the plight of 9,000,000 sharecroppers of the South who make up the lowest stratum in America.

FEB 15 1941

National Sharecroppers Week is under the joint auspices of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and the Workers Defense League.

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Share Croppers Week March 2-9

MAR 1 1941

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Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

SHARECROPPER WEEK BEING OBSERVED IN NATION, MARCH 2-9

MAR 14 1941

Dr. F. P. Graham, Howard Kester, Senator Capper And Other Liberals in Movement.

MAR 14 1941

NEW YORK, Feb. 27—In accepting the chairmanship of the Committee of Sponsors, of National Sharecroppers Week 1941, Dr. Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, declared concerning the desperate condition of these millions of sharecroppers: "The future of our great democracy depends upon the well-being of all Americans. We must guard against totalitarianism from without by achieving true democracy within. We cannot say that we have a true democracy when the wretchedness in which the sharecropper families who know first-hand misery and destitution. They till the soil they do not own, live in shacks, and have little or no cash income. A new way of life must be found for the sharecroppers—a way of life that will give them economic and moral security."

National Sharecroppers Week 1941, sponsored jointly by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and the Workers Defense League, starts March 2 and ends March 9. All readers of labor and race papers are urged to support the Week to the utmost. They can find out by writing at once to National Sharecroppers Week, 112 East 19th Street, how they can cooperate in their home communities. Those in the neighborhood of New York City are urged to attend the dinner to be held at the Hotel Roosevelt the night of March 7, at which President Graham will be chairman, and other speakers will be Samuel Grafton, popular columnist of the New York Post, who made a survey of conditions in the South last year; David Dubinsky, President of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Dr. Arthur Raper, research secretary of the Commission on Inter-racial Cooperation, who has just published a book on the sharecroppers called, "Sharecroppers All;" Rev. Howard Kester, Secretary of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, who lives and works in the sharecropper country, and J. R. Butler, president of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

MAR 14 1941

The National Committee of Sponsors includes Senator Arthur Capper, Senator Elbert D. Thomas, Hon. Emanuel Celler, Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott, Paul F. Brissenden, Hon. Newbold Morris, Governor John Moses, William Allen White, David Clendenin, and Talullah Bankhead.

The New York City Committee of Sponsors, of which Mrs. Raymond V. Ingersoll is chairman, has Mayor F. H. LaGuardia as its honorary chairman.

4-1941

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
June 30, 1941

They Come to Town

The other day was printed the statement that numbers of persons, most of them negroes, were applying to government agencies in Charleston for work relief.

The other day was printed the statement from Roy Jones, state commissioner of agriculture, that from sections of South Carolina, acute shortage of farm labor was reported.

SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS' UNION

4-1941
Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

7TH ANNUAL CONFAB WILL OPEN JAN. 31

Arkansas Prepares For Coming Of Southern Union Organization

JAN 18 1941

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Southern Tenant Farmers Union, the tenant and sharecropper organization of the cotton planting south that has been more in the news since its beginning in 1934 than any other southern union this week announced its seventh annual convention to be held in the Labor Temple of the Arkansas Federation of Labor, Little Rock, Ark., January 31, and February 1 and 2. The STFU held its second annual convention in the same hall in 1936.

The union's vice president, F. R. Betton, who lives at Cotton Plant, Ark., said that he considered 1940 the greatest year in many respects in the entire history of the union. Fanfare and lurid publicity, he said, had given way to solid trade union achievement.

As one instance of improvements, he pointed to the fact that the union had rid itself of any and all subversive and unAmerican elements that have tried to plague it in the past and to its close cooperation with the Consumer Division of the council of National Defense.

President J. R. Butler said that invitations would be given to the heads of all departments, bureaus and agencies of the government that are in any manner concerned with the problems of tenants, sharecroppers and migratory workers, to be present or send representatives to explain to the delegates and visitors at the convention exactly how the various agencies can and do function in the interest of these workers.

Invitations will also be extended to labor leaders in agriculture and industry and to all civic organizations whose aims are in accord with those of the Southern Tenant Farmers union.

He said that all visitors whether specially invited or not, who are in sympathy with our efforts to better our condition, will be welcomed at the convention.

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, La.

TENANT FARMERS INVITED TO JOIN WITH FEDERATION

FEB 3 1941

(The Associated Press)

Little Rock, Ark., Feb. 2.—George L. Googe, Atlanta, Southern representative of the American Federation of Labor, Saturday asked the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union to send delegates to future A. F. of L. conventions.

Commending S. T. F. U. officials for "cleaning house and getting rid of those Communists and the C. I. O.," Googe said S. T. F. U. representatives would be seated at A. F. of L. conventions as "fraternal delegates." The S. T. F. U. has no direct affiliation.

Googe and H. L. Mitchell, member of the S. T. F. U. national council, were principal speakers at Saturday's session of the union's seventh annual convention.

FEB 3 1941

Mitchell urged the union to "abandon its present policy of pure trade-unionism and return to the principle upon which it was founded and 'put the man of the land back on the land' . . ." He asserted there was "no basis for trade unionism in Southern agriculture with conditions such as prevail."

The convention adopted resolutions:

Urging the agriculture department to permit use of idle lands for subsistence crops by farmers unable to obtain land for general farming;

Requesting Congress and state Legislatures to outlaw the plantation commissary system;

Asking the agriculture adjustment administration to allow minimum allotments of seven acres to producers instead of five.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Farmers' Union To Little Rock

FEB 8 1941

FEB 2 8 1941

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Jan. 16—The Southern Tenant Farmers Union, white tenant and sharecropper organization of the Cotton Plantation belt that has been more in the news since its beginning in 1934 than any other southern union today announced the calling of its seventh annual convention. President of the Union, J. R. Butler, said that the convention would be held in the Labor Temple of the Arkansas Federation of Labor, 1121½ West Markham street, Little Rock, Arkansas. The date of the convention is January 31st and February 1st and 2nd, 1941.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Southern Tenant Farmers Pledge To Support A.F. Of L.

FEB 20 1941

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—(SNS)—Strong support of the American Federation of Labor was pledged to the Southern Tenant Farmers Union by George L. Googe, director of the A. F. of L., when he addressed the Seventh Annual Convention of the Union at the Labor Temple in Little Rock, Arkansas, February 2.

Mr. Googe came to the convention as the personal representative of William Green, president of the A. F. of L., who had been invited but could not attend because of pressure of other business. Among other things, Mr. Googe said "The A. F. of L. will extend to the membership of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union all possible moral and material support." In addition he invited the STFU to send representatives to all city central bodies, state federation convention in its territory, declaring that they would be seated as fraternal delegates. He urged membership of the STFU, in return for the support to be given by the A. F. of L. to the STFU, to sponsor a campaign for buying only goods made by union labor. A resolution to this effect was passed by the convention.

The trend of the convention was toward a continuation and intensification of the Union's policy of trade unionism, and a definite program to further this aim was adopted. Convention resolutions include: demands for extension of the Farm Security Administration's program.. a minimum wage (including old age pensions and unemployment compensation for farm labor). The delegates also instructed incoming officers to begin work on the development of co-operative projects including a traveling health clinic.

FEB 20 1941

The convention also heard an address by C. M. Measel, Farm Security Administration labor relations director, who, in reply to charged made that there had been discrimination against members of the STFU by local FSA personnel, said that such was not the policy of the Farm Security Administration. Mr. Measel stated that his office would co-operate in abolishing such abuses. David Clendenin, national secretary of the Workers Defense League, from New York City, told the delegates of plans underway for the setting up of a southern division of this legal defense agency with headquarters in Atlanta, Ga and pledged continuing support in the STFU's fight to protect the rights of its members. Other speakers addressing the convention during its two and one-half day session were Frank W. McCulloch, director of the James Mullenbach Institute, from Chicago; H. M. Thackery, secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas Federation of Labor; Miss Gladys Baker and Frances Williams, representing the Consumer Division of the National Defense Commission from Washington, D C.

The convention closed Sunday morning with the election of officers for the year as follows:

President, J. R. Butler, Memphis, Tenn.: vice-president, F. R. Betton, Cotton Plant, Ark.; secretary, H. L. Mitchell, Memphis, Tenn.; national executive council: D. A. Griffin, Fair Oaks, Ark.; Noah P. Graham, Bragg City, Mo.; W. R. Purcells, Muskigee, Okla.; W. M. Tanner, Kennett, Missouri; J. E. Clayton, Houston, Texas; Roy Parks, Portageville, Mo.; J. F. Hynds, Forrest City, Ark.; B. S. Beck, Gobler, Missouri.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

COTTON FIELD HANDS' INTIMIDATION FEARED

AUG 26 1941

False Reports Of Deaths Are Received By Families Of Pickers

Organized intimidation of Memphis negroes by farm unions to frighten them from picking cotton unless planters agree to higher wages for field hands was believed by Crittenden County (Ark) police to have started yesterday.

The first evidence of a campaign of fear, which planters of Eastern Arkansas and Northern Mississippi have anticipated for past weeks, came in a telephone call to a Memphis negro couple that their son had been killed in the wreck of a truck bearing a load of Memphis negro cotton pickers near Chatfield, Ark.

AUG 26 1941

Wreck Is Not Found

Efforts to locate the scene of the wreck by Crittenden County authorities failed to reveal either a wreck or injuries from any other cause to Memphis cotton picking negroes. Sheriff Howard Curlin at Marion and Deputy C. C. Culp at West Memphis said they had heard nothing of such a wreck. The Chatfield Mercantile Co., at Chatfield, which is 15 miles south of West Memphis, also reported no knowledge of a wreck.

"My personal opinion is that the C. I. O. Union was responsible for the scare," Deputy Culp said. "We don't know of any particular person who might have phoned about the wreck, but I feel pretty sure the union was behind it."

The call was received by the wife of Robert Hudson, longtime negro employe of Mrs. Laura S. Hines, 1883 Galloway. The Hudsons live at 2350 Brooklyn. The woman said a negro's voice informed her of the son's death.

Other Calls Received

Shortly after the first phone call, other negroes in the Brooklyn area received similar calls that their relatives had been killed in a wreck. Seeking information of the wreck, Mrs. Hines talked by phone to Deputy Culp who then sought to locate the accident without avail.

Two unions, the Southern Tenant Farmers, an independent, and the Southern Cotton States Council, an affiliate of the C. I. O. United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, Allied Workers of America, are seeking to organize the tenant farmers and farm hands here and in the adacent territory.

Planters in this section said last week that information has reached them of a planned strike of cotton hands for higher wages. The present wage is 75 cents to $1 a hundred pounds, as compared with 50 cents to 75 cents at the opening of last season.

AUG 26 1941

The planters have charged that the unions contemplate using "gangster" tactics to frighten the unemployed in Memphis from picking the present crop.

Boyle Issues Statement

Commissioner Boyle said yesterday that no intimidation would be tolerated by Memphis police.

"We won't stand for intimidation of cotton pickers or anyone else in any form," he said. "Anyone who wants to cross the bridge at Memphis to pick cotton in Arkansas, or who wants to go into Mississippi, can do so. We will see that none stops them.

"I understand that some men have been imported here to threaten the pickers and if we learn this is so, we'll soon stop them. Such intimidation won't last long in Memphis."

AUG 26 1941

Planters estimate that five per cent of the cotton crop in a 30-mile radius of Memphis in past years has been picked by the unemployed here. The attempt to intimidate yesterday was a forerunner of similar efforts to frighten away Memphis negroes before Sept. 1, when a heavy demand is expected for pickers, they said.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Sharecropper Couple Sues Tenn. Planter

NOV 15 1941

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—Walter and Agnes Webb have filed suit in Chancery court against Charles Lanier and Memphis Compress and Storage company.

The Webbs charge Lanier, who operates a farm near Forest Hill, Tenn., with breach of contract. The bill says the Webbs entered an agreement with Lanier which entitled them to half the crop produced. After the agreement was made January 10, the bill states the Webbs cleared land, cleaned ditches, planted 20 acres of cotton and had completed most of the work on the crop other than harvesting. In June, Lanier told the Webbs he had decided to change the agreement, and the Webbs would receive only half the produce of 15 acres, the bill declares. The Webbs say they left and that since then most of the cotton has been picked. The bill says that at least 15 bales is at Memphis compress and is worth at least $1,000.

Farm Laborers' Union Demands Full Price For Sharecroppers' Cotton At Markets

Convention Delegates Plead For Social Scurity Benefits, Outlawing Of Poll Tax—Unanimously Condemns Tenant Farmers' Union.

HARVIELL, Mo., June 26—Delegates from 26 United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, CIO locals representing 30,000 sharecroppers, wage laborers and tenant farmers in the South, met at the Sharecroppers Camp at Harviell, Mo., Saturday and Sunday, June 14 and 15, for the third annual convention of the Southern States' Cotton Council.

JUN 28 1941

Three hundred delegates raised the demand of ten per cent of the cotton market price for picking cotton and the full market price for the sharecroppers' share of cotton sold. They pointed out that virtual peonage existed in the South by reason of slavery wages of 60c and $1 a day, and payment of this in brozine money and doodlum books, redeemable only at the boss' "robissary."

WANT SECURITY BENEFITS

Leaders stated, "the only time anything was done about our conditions in the South was when we had a demonstration on Highway 61. If this is the only way we can get attention and assistance, there will be more demonstrations, until such time as we can enjoy the so-called American standard of living and see some of the democracy that we hear talked about."

Resolutions were adopted calling for coverage of agricultural workers under the Wage-Hour Law, complete coverage under the Social Security laws, an end to discrimination against Negroes in FSA, home economics projects, NYA, WPA, school lunch programs, and state expenditures for education. Expansion of rural rehabilitation projects was demanded through increased appropriations under the Jones-Bankhead Act. A resolution was adopted asking for medical service for the low income farm groups.

CONDEMN TENANTS UNION

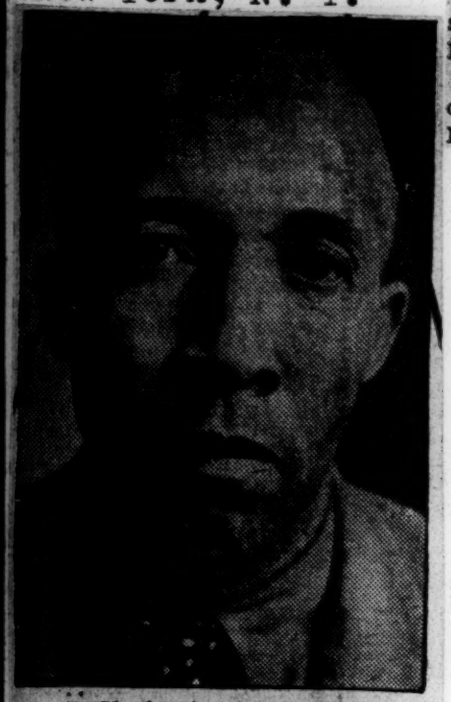
The delegates demanded that their Constitutional right to the vote be upheld and that the poll tax be abolished in the South. They condemned the use of U.S. Government troops as strike breakers, and called upon their so-called representatives in Congress to take no action to abridge the democratic right of workers to strike.

By unanimous vote, the delegates adopted a resolution voicing their complete allegiance to the program of the UCAPAWA-CIO, and condemning the tactics of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, in their money raising schemes in the North, through exaggerated claims of membership in the South.

Speakers and officers at the convention included Harold J. Lane, secretary-treasurer of the UCAPAWA, Rev. Owen H. Whitfield, vice-president of UCAPAWA; Harry Koger, president of the Southern States Cotton Council, and Mr. Bankson of the Farm Security Administration.

JUN 28 1941

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.



REV. OWEN WHITFIELD

MAR 7 1941

Jewish Parley To Hear Negro Farm Leader

Rev. Whitfield, Leader Of Sharecroppers, Guest Speaker

Rev. Owen H. Whitfield, Negro leader of the nation's sharecroppers and vice-president of the United Cannery, Agriculture, Packing and Allied Workers' Union of America, will come from St. Louis to address the opening session of the Fifth National Convention of the Jewish People's Committee, it was announced. The session will be held at Mecca Temple on Saturday evening, March 22.

One of the most dramatic incidents which is symbolic of his leadership is the historic Missouri Highway demonstration of 1939, which he led. Whitfield sacrificed his home and farm and led his wife and family out with 2,000 other Negro and white families to fave the January winter and the Missouri Highway patrol.

MAR 7 1941

Another speaker at the opening session of the convention will be Rep. Marcantonio.

The business sessions will be held on Sunday, March 23 at the Hotel Diplomat.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

CIO Sharecroppers Meet, Chart Fighting Program

26 Locals of Cannery Union at Parley, Delegates Demand Fair Share of Cotton Price; Denounce Peonage; Wages, Relief, Peace Stressed

(Special to the Daily Worker)

CHICAGO, June 18.—Delegates from twenty-six United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, CIO locals representing 30,000 sharecroppers, wage laborers and tenant farmers in the South met at the Sharecroppers Camp at Harviell, Missouri, Saturday and Sunday, June 14 and 15, for the Third Annual Convention of the Southern States Cotton Council.

Three hundreds delegates raised the demand of ten per cent of the cotton market price for picking cotton and the full market price for the sharecroppers' share of cotton sold. They pointed out that virtual peonage existed in the South by reason of slavery wages of 60 cents and $1 a day, and payment of this in brozine money and doodlum books, redeemable only at the boss's "robsisary." Leaders stated, "the only time anything was done about our conditions in the South was when we had a demonstration on Highway 61. If this is the only way we can get attention and assistance, there will be more demonstrations, until such time as we can enjoy the so-called American standard of living and see some of the democracy that we hear talked about."

Resolutions were adopted calling for coverage of agricultural workers under the Wage-Hour Law, complete coverage under the Social Security Laws, an end to discrimination against Negroes in FSA, Home Economics projects, NYA, WPA, school lynch programs, and state expenditures for education. Expansion of rural rehabilitation projects was demanded through increased appropriations under the Jones-Bankhead Act. A resolution was adopted asking for medical service for the low income farm groups.

The delegates demanded that their constitutional right to the vote be upheld and that the poll tax be abolished in the South. They condemned the use of U. S. Government troops as strike-breakers, and called upon Congress to take no action to abridge the democratic right of workers to strike.

A program for intensified work among the youth was adopted, with endorsement of the Southern Negro Youth Congress and the League of Young Southerners, and calling for organization of the young people in cooperation with the union. "Our parents can't do the fighting if we go to war. The young people ought to be glad of an opportunity to get up and voice their protest against war. We don't want war. We want homes for the homeless, jobs for the jobless, land for the landless, education and freedom to live and have families of our own," as one youth expressed it.

The adopted program was dedicated to Elinor Henderson, wife of International President Donald Henderson, whose recent death ended a long period of devoted work among agricultural workers.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

SUPREME COURT ASKED TO OUTLAW GA. PEONAGE

BRILLIANT PLEA ANALYZES STATUS OF SLAVE DEBTOR

DEC 20 1941 DEC 20 1941

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 18—While all America was celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court here was formally requested to issue a second "Emancipation Proclamation" to abolish widespread peonage in the state of Georgia. The plea was made by two white Georgia lawyers, serving without fees, in the case of Ira Taylor vs. The State of Georgia.

The case had been pushed through the lower courts and the Supreme Court of Georgia by the Commission on Interracial Cooperation of Atlanta, Ga., which has paid all court costs. Making a frontal attack on the widespread practice of debt slavery in Georgia, the two young lawyers, Leonard Haas and Thomas Taylor Purdom (the latter only admitted to U. S. Supreme Court practice on Monday), assailed the Georgia act of August 15, 1903, which permits chain gang and public work sentences on conviction of "Fraud" growing out of failure to pay debts or perform contract service. Failure to perform such a contract or to repay money gained thereby is presumptive evidence of intent to fraud under the Georgia statute.

DEC 20 1941

ARRESTED A SECOND TIME

Ira Taylor, the defendant in the case, was convicted of violating sections 715 and 716 of this code on April 29, 1940 as is typical in other infamous Georgia cases, Taylor, a tenant in a house owned by R. L. Hardie, a white storekeeper in Wilkinson County, Georgia, was thrown into jail when he allegedly failed to pay Hardie $12 for three months' rent.

After Taylor had spent three months in jail, Hardie allegedly bailed him out for $19.50, sheriffs costs on a promise that Taylor would "work the sum out" at $1.25 a day at some later date in helping Hardie to build another house. Later Hardie had Taylor arrested again for allegedly failing to work the $19.50 out, and the latter was convicted as a common cheat and swindler, and "sentenced to do work in a public work camp for a period of eight months."

ATTACK MADE ON SLAVE SYSTEM

Attorneys Haas and Purdom appealed the case to the Georgia Supreme Court which upheld the conviction despite a 30-year old U. S. Supreme Court ruling opposing such debt servitude. Although Taylor's case is being used to test the Georgia code, the lawyers made it plain that they were attacking the whole widespread peonage system.

To prove how widespread this system is, the attorneys quoted a resolution from the Georgia Baptist Convention (white) in 1939 which declared: "There are more Negroes held by these debt slavers than were actually owned as slaves before the war between the states. The method is the only thing which has changed."

DEC 20 1941

The attorneys also illustrated this intention of the Georgia Supreme Court to uphold this system by pointing out that this court has thrice upheld the constitutionality of the statute since the U. S. Supreme Court ruled against such peonage in the case of Bailey vs. Alabama some 30 years ago.

QUOTE BLACK'S FLA. DECISION

Declaring that the sole purpose of the statute is to coerce workers into involuntary servitude, the attorneys charged that the Georgia statute violated both the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments, the peonage abolition act adopted by Congress in 1867, and the constitution of the state of Georgia, which specifically forbids imprisonment for debt. In a brilliant brief filed with the court, they quoted Associate Justice Hugo Black's decision on the Florida "Little Scottsboro Case" which said:

"Today, as in ages past, we are not without tragic proof that the exalted power of some governments to punish manufactured crime dictatorially is the handmaid of tyranny. Under our constitutional system, courts stand against any winds that blows as havens of refuge for those who might otherwise suffer because they are helpless, weak, outnumbered, or because they are non-conforming victims of prejudice and public excitement."

In a plea for outlawing of the peonage statute the lawyers told the court: "A ringing pronouncement from this tribunal, declaring this oppressive statute unconstitutional and void, would constitute a second Emancipation Proclamation for the present debt slaves in Georgia." The U. S. Supreme Court is expected to heed that plea. Dr. Will W. Alexander is executive director of the Commission on Interracial Co-operation which maintains headquarters at 710 Standard Building, Atlanta.